

## FOUNDATIONS OF INDIAN SWARAJ

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BY

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MADRAS

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# **"The Future Government of India"**

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**The Times** —This volume is the most notable contribution that has yet been made by any Indian writer to the constructive side of the Indian problem. Mr K Vyasa Rao is an original and independent thinker.

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## FOREWORD

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I OWE it to the reader to explain why I have not attempted in the following pages to offer any alternative suggestions in regard to the attainment of Swaraj by India. The atmosphere in India is such that not until we are in a position to appraise correctly the value of factors which at present command the tacit approval of the bulk of the country will there be much chance for other lines of advance. The country must shake itself free from the present incubus before it could be expected to consider earnestly other schemes of political betterment.

The whirl of non-co operation with its various phases, through which the country

has gone, has its very valuable aspect no doubt but it could hardly be gainsaid that it has left the political mind of India in a state of utter unpracticality. It is desirable therefore that the basic idea of attaining Swaraj through non-violent non co operation should undergo a close analysis as a subject of primary importance in itself.

Whatever other programme may be adopted by a majority of Indian politicians, the present programme of Mahatma Gandhi cannot be suffered to absorb the public mind as a scheme that could effectuate a change in the character of the Indian political situation. Its inadequacy as well as its impracticability, its delusive nature as well as its failure so far, have to make way through the rank and file of its adherents before the country may be expected to admit the need for turning to other courses of action.

It has appeared to me therefore premature to enter on any fruitful discussion of alternatives. I have for this reason sought to concentrate attention on what is still exercising the public mind as suitable foundations for raising the edifice of Swaraj.

I need hardly conceal that a vein of pessimism may seem to run through the following pages. I am confident, however, when the country ceases to hug delusions and begins to face realities, it will derive a new vitality, born of the effort, whose impetus will be transmitted through the whole civilised world. Western civilisation is a game, the nature of which India, being in it and not of it, can accurately gauge. It can also take a hand in the game, if driven to. No one need despair of a country which can see far into the past and far into the future as India alone can and dedicate

itself to the service of humanity in its higher and loftier needs in a spirit of true self-effacement as no other nation is equipped to do. A nation that makes up its mind not to live for itself can never die, nor could it fail to accomplish what is indispensable for its allotted mission in God's providence. India has only to realise her power, awakening from the stupor of a century, and requisition those gifts which are hers for ever and she will not fail to prove a match to the greatest single power of the world.

TRIPPLICANE, }  
6th July, 1925 }

K. VYASA RAO.

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# FOUNDATIONS OF INDIAN SWARAJ

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## CHAPTER I

### Introductory

MOMENTOUS issues have been confronting India and its rulers for some time past. They are not issues exercising speculative minds. They are issues live with the power to generate an uncommon spirit of suffering and sacrifice on the part of those who have to encounter them. We examine these issues without discussing their genesis, without tracing their historical sequence and attempting to apportion responsibility. Inviting as this latter task

may be, the need of the moment is a frank discussion of the issues themselves. The cultural eminence of India, its progress in education on western lines and its intimate contact with the West would have failed of their purpose if the political turmoil we see to-day had not been witnessed. While we may be filled with hope even on this account that hope does not render a close examination of the currents of thought claiming acceptance unnecessary. We have to disentangle what is futile from what is practicable, we have to assign values on the market estimate of grim and unwelcome facts and not on the face value of phrases. We have to correct excessive credit given to pathetic assumptions.

Cast on the waves of commotion, India has drifted from England during the last seven years and has come to speak in a language which carries some meaning

to itself, but leaves the other more puzzled than enlightened. Not the least striking feature of the situation is that England and India each equally seems to be coming to know its own mind regarding the other less and less.

Politics is no doubt a game in the sense that one has to play against another, but it is by no means a game in which the player does not know his mind or refuses to know it. A series of quick changes will be interesting and even useful provided they are brought about to serve an underlying purpose with a definite aim. But the political transformations between 1919 and 1925 have been in regard to India in the nature of one individual's semi-ethical and semi-political unfolding, the whole country having been swept along the trail of this process. Swarajya was promised on the finding of a crore of rupees in August of some years

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past, postponed to a later month and Swarajya has refused to come into view for all the *tantraic* and *mantraic* processes, for all the *talisman* worn, for the *foreign* fabrics discarded, for all the *hartals* enforced, satyagraha undergone and yarns spun

Patriotism, a preference for rural industrialism, a desire to return to the simple life, a spirit of profound distrust in the triumphs of modern Science and a desperate impatience to erase in a day as part of a political programme the time worn lineaments of an immense federal social organisation have all become inextricably mixed up together with an insistent demand for political freedom of the vaguest type. Although the prophesied era has not dawned on the country as a result of what has transpired, other consequences that were not wanted and were feared by many from skirmishes to riots, from hooliganism to hell on earth

have had to be experienced, as a phase of the political ferment that was to usher in Swarajya.

While leaders of political movements have kept themselves engaged in promulgating the triple or quadruple boycotts and in weighing the merits of wrecking from within and non-co-operating from without and of enforcing an unheard of political subscription in the form of spinning, the bureaucracy has gone on piling up taxation, duplicating the administrative machinery and reeling off in quick succession costly Commissions of enquiry. An expanding and deepening evidence of the lack of a consistent purpose of British rule in India as could be made out by an unvarying policy, however modest that purpose might be, has gone on accumulating. And not the least remarkable of all has been the policy of wrecking resorted to by the authorities in carrying out

measures of reform from which new epochs were expected

While opportunists have flourished far beyond their deserts on account of this divergence between India's claims and England's method of meeting them, the ardent and sincere section of the country has suffered and sacrificed far beyond the necessities of the situation, transcending any proportionate benefit to the cause it has suffered for. Spilling its favours and scattering its patronage to the good of this class of politicians but accumulating damaging testimony against its declared intentions by the acts of its proxies in England and in India, Great Britain is making the destiny of its greatest dependency increasingly formidable in its uncertainties

It seems as though well intentioned patriots will not cease committing grave blunders and a deep-seeing Government

will not fail to profit by every one of them

No longer could it be considered advisable to put off a close examination of what has come to possess the imagination of the country as effective lines of political advance. The following pages deal with the obstacles that lie in the way of effecting a radical change in India's political status. Whether or not Indians will be able to bring about such a change, it would be useful not to be lost in barren endeavours misled by a lack of clear vision and helped by illusions. Patriotism does not consist in closing one's eyes to realities or in belittling the importance of factors that must operate to disadvantage. It should be neither criminal nor unpatriotic to face facts. To invite attention to shoals and quicksands, to rocks and eddies in the course of our navigation is not deterring the voyage any more than it

would be disloyal to point to the widening gulf between England and India. Written with this conviction the following pages have not the least intention to disparage India's ambition for political freedom, to exaggerate the obstacles in the way or to withhold the full meed of praise from those to whom praise in ample measure is fully due. But in showering praise where it may be due one may also point out that two and two will not suffice to make five. One may admire the pertinacity with which the thirsty traveller in a desert walks on to reach the wave on wave of water he sees from a distance ; but one may point out also that it is a deceptive phenomenon. When a political mirage monopolises the vision of a large section of patriotic Indians it is necessary to start an investigation instead of assuming that patriotism ought to be proof against mistakes or that purity of character should



be a guarantee against wrong judgment. No critic claims to possess a monopoly of right judgment any more than leaders of patriotic political movements; the main thing is to grant that the critic is actuated by motives as honest and patriotic as those that actuate them.

## CHAPTER II

### The Fallacy of Soul Power

“Swarajya” in its literal interpretation means “Self-sovereignty” It implies more than what is conveyed by Home Rule or Dominion status A “Swaraj India” will mean India as a sovereign power If however a qualified significance is assigned to the term “Swarajya” then it may mean any kind of political autonomy subject to a superior Sovereign Power If India’s search is for autonomy under British rule, it would be conducive to better understanding, greater harmony and clearness of purpose to ask for autonomy for India under the British Government, thereby doing away with the uncertainty and irritating suspicions that the term “Swarajya” engenders But “Swarajya” installed under the banner

of non-co operation with the Government forbids the interpretation of autonomy. Non co-operation not being with any of the measures of Government, but with the Government itself, "Swarajya" that is sought after must be for replacing that Government. When Dadhabhai Naoroji used the term "Swarajya" in 1906 in his last presidential address to the Indian National Congress at Calcutta there was no non-co-operation and the term was a convenient abbreviation for self government under British sovereignty. When the Duke of Connaught says India in good time will have "Swaraj" we know in what sense he uses the term. But when we read in the Belgaum presidential address that "though non violent non co operation has not brought us Swaraj, non-violent non co operation as a means of attaining political freedom has

come to stay and even its partial success has brought us nearer Swaraj," Swaraj and political freedom stand as synonymous terms *Non-co operation with the Government to establish political freedom cannot be the same as an agitation for obtaining autonomy in internal administration* The goal is self sovereignty, the method is non-violent non co-operation and the power we exert is the soul power of India Mankind has not known, says Gandhi, of warfare except with weapons It has been reserved to India to carry on a war with "soul power" as its weapon "Swarajists" who enter the Council as the executive of the Congress will wreck Government from within by non-violent non co-operation. The country will spin and become a political nation and will carry the scheme of non-co operation to its logical end when the time comes by peaceful refusal of taxes These are not the speculative

postulates of Gandhi; they form the practical programme on which he has embarked with not an inconsiderable backing from the country. To effectuate all these he depends upon the soul power of India.

What on the other hand could possibly be the position of England towards India? To the British mind there could be only two positions natural to India. These are either independence of Great Britain or of subjection to British rule, whatever may be the measure of autonomy India may enjoy at any given time. This measure of autonomy may be analogous to "Dominion status", or it may amount to next to nothing, as at present. However, from one end of this autonomy to the other, the status of India is that of subjection and no more. Those who have spoken and written largely on 'Dominion status'

for India have failed to notice one most vital circumstance besides using a term incapable of precise significance. Dominion status differs with each Dominion, Colony or Commonwealth although one common feature of oversea dominions is that they have complete fiscal and administrative independence of Great Britain. Even taking 'Dominion status' to mean similar independence when applied to India, in one circumstance India, enjoying that status under Great Britain, will be crucially different from the self-governing British Dominions. Had they noticed this circumstance they would not have been fascinated by the term *Dominion* status as though it meant a separate genus in Indo British political relationship. *That circumstance is the fact that it is entirely in the option of the Dominions to retain or terminate that status.* On the other

hand, whatever Dominion status India may get it will have to retain at the option of Great Britain. Canada and Australia are patches of British soil thrown across the sea. They are as good as treaty powers and are daughter nations at the same time. Their political status is of their choice, they being in a position to declare independence. If the political status of India should become analogous to that of Canada but without the power on the part of India to determine for itself a status of independence, it will still continue to be a status of subjection and will not become Dominion status. It will be the status of a dependency and not that of a British Dominion.

tion has been stated with the intensive brevity that becomes statesmen in the very Reform Act intended to train Indians to Responsible Government. England can therefore contemplate only two kinds of political status for India in relation to itself, either independence or subjection. In other words, so long as England holds India, she could hold India only as country governed by herself, however real or nominal her governance may be at any particular period.

Is India then aspiring for independence or asking for autonomy under Great Britain?

To mystify our answer by the use of the word "Swaraj" will no longer do. Having carried on non-violent non-cooperation with the Government and not merely with its measures, and having embarked upon a policy of wrecking from within, refusing office and with-



holding co-operation in the responsibility of administration, the answer, if it is to be consistent with what has transpired could only be that when Indians want Swaraj they desire to be, what all other peoples are in their countries i.e., independent of any other country.

And what are our prospects of independence? We may no doubt conceive the downfall of England and the disappearance of British rule from India owing to causes that have nothing to do with India. But such a disappearance would only mean an intervening period of chaos before another Power steps into the place of Great Britain. Indians may have to change their masters without becoming masters themselves. Unless the termination of British rule is the outcome of the exertion of Indians by non-violent non-co-operation or by the short cut of a revolution its mere dis-

appearance will mean nothing to India but a period of disorder before the commencement of another period of subjection

India may get a just and honest nation to rule over it, or it may come under the heels of a more selfish foreign Power which may make the country sigh in vain for the freedom and good government it enjoyed even under Great Britain But political independence for India in the sense that France or Great Britain has got is thinkable only if Indians of their own power end British rule And what prospect is there of their doing it by the exertion of soul power? The world belongs to the strong So said the ancients of India and of every other country So find the moderns at the present day. Strong does not necessarily mean strong in muscle, but strong to destroy enemies Yes, to overcome

and if need be to destroy. To the virtuous may belong the next world. But this world is for the strong and is of the strong; it does not belong to the virtuous and self-denying without physical strength and martial power. It is not meant that the world belongs to the brutal. To be strong is not necessarily to be brutal; nor to be brutal is necessarily to be strong. The really strong who are confident of their strength are rarely brutal, are brutal only in moments of panic or of uncontrollable passion; and brutality is not an unfailing attribute of strength. It will be a lamentable blunder if millions of people should labour under the notion that there could exist power without strength behind it; and if what has been harped upon as "soul power" should have no reference to strength, it is a power that availeth

not in the political world. Consciousness of real strength is the vital part of soul power. Such soul power is real power and need not even be manifested in acts of strength. To be conscious of soul power in the sense of moral virtue alone without being conscious of protecting strength at the same time is to mistake a part of soul power for the whole of it. *It is the soul power of the strong that counts and tells.* The soul power of the weak, the divided, the unequipped and the undisciplined fizzles out in philosophic despair and sullen reaction. The question therefore is, Is India strong enough in the soul power which is really a power, strong enough to throw off the mastery of

horse to ford a stream. There must be power in the soul whereas what India has is soul without effective power. It may produce great men, great in every walk of life, and it may produce great souls in abundance but soul power it has not for obtaining political mastery in its own right and of its own exertion, because of the lack of power, power, in its full sense.

True, the Hindus have not been numbered with the extinct peoples of the world as the Assyrians or Egyptians or as the Mexicans of a few centuries back and are not disappearing as the interesting Red Indian tribes, but it is a strange proposition that if a people do not become extinct they are reserved to become politically independent. Existence and political independence are not inevitably consequential upon each other, are not universally interdependent. Independent nations have perished in the past and

dependent nations exist at present. On the other hand, India has lived through ages because it has subordinated its political identity to its spirituality. Nay, it has sacrificed the one for the sake of the other. It has lived and let others live. More, it has lived by letting others live and obtain mastery over it. It has surrendered its political existence for the sake of its spiritual existence. It has never acted in the spirit, "let me perish if I cannot live as an independent political power". Of what worth is this spirituality to itself or to others, this is not the occasion to examine. Its spiritual identity is a fact, its political effacement is a fact. It may light on worse days, and famine and pestilence and misgovernment and a ceaseless economic drain may bring about the gradual extinction of its peoples. Or, it may have a great future, worthy of its past, without

political independence entering into that greatness, and it may discharge its role as the recognized spiritual teacher of the world. But that it will become westernised and unified as another Japan on a large scale so as to exert its soul power for political mastery does not seem to be in the book of the future. Japan, when it saw its political danger ahead, gave up its Easternism and left its whole past behind it. In one decisive moment it decreed the abolition of all distinctions and privileges of class and grade and ordered a pound of beef to every soldier to be compulsorily served out. If it had weighed in the balance the ethical aspect of cow slaughter and *ahimsa* of the Great Enlightened One whom it worshiped, if it had wavered between the soft prehistoric feudalism of the land of the rising sun and the flare of a centralised, unified and democratised governance of

the country, it would have become long ago a satellite of a power greater than itself. But Japan made up its mind as one man. It forgot in one day all its past and it was one people when it did so. To begin with *Japan was not only a country but a people also* and it had only to plunge into a startling and unique experiment. Its existence depended upon its emerging out of that experiment successfully. It had soul power and put forth all that soul power in one supreme effort. Whereas India's soul power, can it be thrown into one cause, into one mundane achievement? That soul power, in some of its unignorable aspects, lies divided between the maintenance and obliteration of caste and communal barriers in regard to eating, drinking, marriage and worship so far as the Hindus are concerned and is held in reserve for the



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prevention of music before mosques, the care of the Hedjas, and concern for a far-off Khalifate, wherever it might exist and whether it might even exist or not so far as the Moslems are concerned. The nation cannot will as a nation, act as a nation and achieve as a nation. Even if there could be a nation of castes, communities, races and creeds, unless they are prepared to rise above whatever will militate against their obtaining political independence to act as a nation, notwithstanding their division into castes and communities, they could hardly become a unified political entity. To depend upon the soul power of a congeries of communities, castes and creeds in such startling gradations of culture, aspiration and political ambition and incapable of political cohesion for winning independence will be to depend upon a copious supply of cucumbers for the extraction of solar heat.

We may also fancy an India independent of Great Britain at this very moment, in order to be able to visualise the condition of the country if independence should be a practicable achievement at no distant future. The creed of the Swarajists and Congressmen being that India should have Swaraj even immediately if possible, it would be puerile to ask England to stay in India for guaranteeing India's independence. Whether England rules or does not rule India, England cannot rule as aspirants for severance want it to rule. It may no doubt alter its administrative details and confer greater responsibility on the ruled in the exercise of its discretion as the ruling country. But it cannot act to the dictation of aspirants for independence to secure which a programme has been entered upon. The power to petition is always conceded and the power to protest is also conceded.

But no one could possibly concede the power to impose responsibility on authorities from whom a separation has been urged. The latter claim will be tantamount to a political relationship in which India is not only to become independent but is to partake in the direction of British policy also. Assuming therefore that the peculiar transitional stage of Indian independence along with the continuance of British protection during this period is not available, it will be easy for us to fancy what India's independence will be worth. Even under British control where that control has been temporarily weakened we have seen what it would be to be without British protection in Kōhat, Malabar and elsewhere during this very period when non-violent soul power has been the moving spirit of the country. Has the Muslim given up his zeal for conversion and for an Islamised East from

Constantinople to Cape Comorin? No one denies that there are hundreds of Muslims who have befriended Hindus more than they have been by their co-religionists. But we are talking in bulk, of the community as a whole and of vast multitudes under the influence, guidance, and direction of a priesthood that has been brought up in the belief that effecting conversions is a certain path to salvation. Which educated Muslim can vouch for a priesthood of this type so as to be able to say that the religious freedom of the Hindu and the personal safety of his women and children will be respected when the control of a strong Government is no longer exercised? Next to these, have the Afghan and the Pathan given up their lust for loot of what belongs to weaker communities? Where is the Muslim League or any Muslim organisation that can, depending upon the soul

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power of India, guarantee safety of person and property from the frontier Muslims?

Going out of the continent of Asia, have all the European nations given up their love of the good things of the world? Have they no need for markets for their manufactured goods, from electric bulbs to oil engines, from pins to spinning and weaving mills? Have they no need for markets for raw materials, for cotton and ground nut, for jute, wheat and what not? If the spices and calicoes of Malabar were attractive enough for engendering rivalry amongst them four hundred years back, what about the vastly increased and improved resources of the country after an unbroken period of peace and administrative efficiency of over a century? Will they not successively come to trade again and will they not attempt to strengthen their prospects of good trade by securing political power?

And in the competition to seize political power, will not the strongest of them become paramount? And will not that power try to retain its supremacy by sending its young men to fill the military and civil services of the country as required by a system of administration that will give the fullest scope for such recruitment? If the Western nations may be expected to come so near, is Japan going to be kept out of the fray for what she may be worth? What are India's resources to withstand the attention of the civilised world thus thrust upon it? In fact, *the entire history of another British Indian occupation will be faithfully repeated*, making the country wish for the advent of a strong settled Government once again. Indians will soon become experts in the languages of their would be rulers and furnish precisely every one of those facilities which they did to the British,

the French, the Dutch and the Portuguese many decades back. The period of trouble and chaos may throw up its Modhoji Scindias and Ranjit Singhs, its Bapu Gokhales, Ramaiyan Dalavays and Purniahs, its Nandkumars and Omichands. The most patriotic of them will feel instinctively that the establishment of a strong Central Government would be in the best interests of the country. *The soul power of India will co-operate towards such an aim, as it did in the establishment of British suzerainty over India.*

From the point of view of being able to make for a politically federated independent India with the use of soul power, India is now in an infinitely worse position than it was at the time when British Rule was established. While its soul power has become that of a physically weaker country the soul power of the West has been

brought at the mercy of a scientific advance to which there is no parallel in the past. While India's soul power is in itself illusory, it cannot fail to strike one as a most dangerous factor to depend upon for helping Indians to retain any independence they may be able to win, when we take note of what has transpired in the West in recent years. Realities could not be ignored in a vein of metaphysical self-sufficiency although self-confidence, self-esteem and self-determination are all valuable entities. These latter qualities, it could scarcely be overlooked, are valuable only when yoked with powers and materials indispensable for a great accomplishment. Indians must resolve to give up the easy game of making a virtue of their weakness as it will deceive no one at a decisive moment. On the other hand they must resolve on the necessity



of virtues they lack. Between making a virtue of necessity and making a necessity of virtue the latter is unquestionably their need. From this point of view, the political leaders guiding the destiny of India at the present time are at absolute variance with all their countrymen who preceded them as the guardians of their country's interests from time immemorial. To the Muslims the necessity of physical strength need hardly be stressed as the spread of the Muslim religion and Muslim power in different parts of the world has gone hand in hand with the use of physical force. Hindu culture, Hindu religion and the genius of the Hindu race have one and all placed the utmost value on physical prowess, martial virtues, valour and heroism, not less than on self-effacement, salvation of the soul and Ahimsa. In fact most of the Avatars or Reincarnations

of the protective Power of the Hindu Trinity had to fall back upon superior strength in vanquishing the enemies of mankind without depending upon the exertion of soul power to bring them to right. It deserves to be remembered that Vishnu the Protector has been uniformly a destroying power for the sake of protection. The universe was never conceived in Hindu philosophy, religion, epics or political science as capable of dispensing with the need for the use of strength for purposes of protection as well as maintenance of peace and development of high spiritual virtues. To neglect what would endue a nation with strength and vitality prompted by a spirit of non-violence is simply to make sure of becoming sooner or later a prey to violence. What has been most regrettably forgotten by the present day apostle of non-violence is the fact *that only the*

hymn of the lofty *Upanishads* the burden of the prayer is "May we with heroes for our sons address the Synods" In sublime strains to *Surya* and *Indira* the ancestors of the Hindu race prayed for strength to vanquish their enemies and wisdom to please the gods The whole of the *Gita* is a sustained and matchless insistence on the choice of the strenuous alternative in life against the insidious doctrine of abnegation in the face of wickedness in a spirit of philosophic retirement Like the ceaseless and resonant voice of the ocean the untiring injunction of the *Gita* is for fighting for what is yours in preference to abandoning it out of a mistaken notion of renunciation It seems as though the *Gita* anticipated and refuted the doctrine of retreating within oneself before evil as a meritorious performance Except in the pale cast of

thought of post Buddhistic literature, the recognition of a higher spirit of renunciation in unflinching action is most distinct and profound. Not in inaction or in action that has no relation to the demands of a situation lies the true spirit of renunciation. In fact no part of Hindu literature, religion or philosophy countenanced the possibility of righteousness on earth without renunciation *for the purpose of action*, not did it countenance the possibility of power to promote righteousness without strength of arms. The ethics, science and art of war received as devoted attention as any other department of knowledge for the well being of man, and physical *sadhana* was carried to perfection.

India must therefore decide upon becoming strong physically and in the arts and sciences that supplement physical strength before relying upon

its soul power to any purpose. If India should expect a change of heart on the part of England it must effect a change of spirit in itself as no change of heart on the part of a ruling country could be hoped for without a change of spirit on the part of the ruled. This change of spirit should not degenerate into an adventure belying all human experience into an undertaking to effect a political mesmerism. The imparting of such an impulse may have its psychological use no doubt; but the sum and substance of such a change ought not to be made of these elements alone. This does not mean of course India should

terrorism will be of any political value to a country situated like India. Were its rulers its own countrymen such acts may be of some use but not when another nation is the ruling power. Any number of acts of violence cannot deplete the British nation, cannot end British rule and could not convey a change of spirit on the part of the people. A secret political crime however patriotically committed does not indicate the strength of a strong nation and far from effecting a change of heart for the better could only effect a change of heart for the worse. It can only embitter and complicate and it finally demoralises the rulers and the ruled alike without weakening the one or strengthening the other. Every such crime must end in repression and block political advance. Questions of constitutional import raised on the advent of such a repressive policy fall

short of their value to a much greater extent than in a country where the rulers and ruled are of the same stock racially. The claim that the Government should act constitutionally in face of secret crimes seeks to impose an untenable obligation on the rulers when a foreign country is the ruling power and when constitutional agitators have embarked upon a policy of non violent non co operation with a view to political freedom. Just as to be strong is not to be brutal and to be brutal is not to be strong so also to be criminal in secret is not to be strong but to be only brutal more or less in a cowardly way.

In therefore insisting upon the attainment of real strength without which the soul power of India could be of no value we eliminate the kind of strength that is exhibited in the commission of secret crimes.

As we have not only to see what prospect there is of India's soul power being sufficient for obtaining political freedom for India but also for guaranteeing that freedom when once obtained from the aggression of the West, it is necessary for us to make a rapid survey of the ideals and influences that animate western nations who are at the present time the most efficient section of the world of humanity. This survey may not be necessary for European readers but it will not be altogether uncalled for in the case of many Indian readers. Europe is no longer what it was when the European nations reached India in wind-borne ships and England, coming to trade, stumbled upon an Empire. The vast changes that have been effected in the science of war during the last ten years almost *pari passu* with the claim of Indians for greater political power would alone be enough to render



## CHAPTER III

### The Outlook of the West

Whether one knows it or not most people go by a philosophy of life and it seems that every nation has to consent to be led by those who have such a philosophy for the time being. We may dismiss laws as of no consequence and take to making ballads and dismiss again ballads as too cumbersome and time-taking for our age and make phrases instead of ballads; but whether they be laws, ballads or phrases they are all the expression of a philosophy of life, intelligently acquiesced in or indifferently complied with. We may feign to hold philosophy in contempt, but it is the want of a philosophy that will make for right impulses that has

foundations. Then commenced a period of enquiry when the foundations of conduct began to be examined, and personal, social, and national obligations to be newly enunciated—the period of the melting pot. In the new faith of those doctrines resting on *a priori* reasoning independent of religion Western humanity tried to find a substitute for sanctions that had been disestablished. The sequel of the French Revolution ending in Napoleonic wars might be taken as the final period of the play of these subversive political postulates and anti-religious dogmas. The period that followed marked a fresh formative era when two philosophical concepts came to have successively general sway over the thinking minds of Europe. Firstly, the theory of the greatest happiness of the greatest number sought to take the place of a new motive power in practical substitution for those

injunctions of religion that had held good till then. This theory led to the spread of humanitarian ideals among those who had lost faith in the claims put forward on behalf of Christian theology. On the one hand rationalist ideals led to the diffusion and expansion of ideas of political rights and on the other hand the theory of the greatest happiness of the greatest number imparted a fresh impulse to beneficent conceptions of human improvement. The abolition of traffic in human beings and the subsequent total abolition of slavery were part of an era of humanitarian impulses and ideals which may be said to have culminated prior to the first half of the 19th century in Europe. And when progress in the principles of economics as a science, the discoveries made in biology, the vast deductions made from a comparative study of the growth and decline of societies established the

deduction of the survival of fittest as a patent conclusion even the sober aspect of the Positivist school began to lose its value in the philosophic and scientific world and came to be practically discredited in the last quarter of the 19th century. But even without such a deduction the theory of the greatest happiness of the greatest number except for the philosophical novelty it had for the time being had severe limitations

democracy or as a rule of benevolent municipal government the theory had its excellence no doubt. But as a world-wide philosophical precept with a view to secure international concord and general human happiness it could be nowhere except through a large revision of inter-racial and inter-national ideals and obligations. And the advent of the doctrine of the survival of the fittest further blocked the way of the positivists. A more dismal consequence, however, was that a fact of nature, an explanation of a biological phenomenon, the result of comparative social and historical study, a deduction such as this should have come to exercise insidiously all the influence, hold and authority of a quasi-religious creed. If the weakest went to the wall, it was to be complacently expected as a legitimate consequence of being weak was taken as the interpretation of the doctrine. From the greatest

happiness of the greatest number to the survival of the fittest—what a gaping space for refuted humanitarianism to reoccupy! It would seem as though the unorganised assault on the citadels of religion that disestablished pre-Protestant Christianity were organised on a scientific basis on the theory of the survival of the fittest with the consequence that to survive as the fittest fired the ambition of

uninterrupted motive power of every nation to the extent to which each nation could put forth its efforts, not even minding such reservation as is dictated by prudence. The brief career of imperial Germany as the challenging exponent and protagonist of this theory must be too fresh in the memory of the reader to need re-narration. The fruits of this philosophy Europe has fully reaped and Western nations have come to the end of their resources so far as can be judged from European thought.

Strange as it may seem, the failure of Western civilization for the uplift of mankind has been aided by the progress of science and the advance of democracy. One who recalls the years of ceaseless European competition in building up armaments with breathless haste would be in a position to see that when there was no war with the actual weapons

of war there was a war all the same in making the weapons of warfare. The great war waged on land, above land, on water and below water would be enough to exhibit in a single flash all the depressing outcome of the combined progress of science and democracy. The application of science to war has put an end to the war of warriors and ushered in the war of machines. Wars there have been of which poets have sung and warriors of whom posterity has been proud. But war to day is no longer a trial of manly virtues. It has become an unyielding rivalry in the perfection and use of scientific machinery for the destruction of human life without even the need to see what is destroyed. While science has been subsidised for so baneful a purpose the causes of rivalry among the nations of the West have become more numerous and more insistent. The progress



of democracy which has done way with the despotism of kings and dynasties has merged the individual in the nation, to the detriment of the humanity in him, while the nation in turn has become as selfish as though it were no more than a huge individual. All that the advent of democracy has warded off is the tyranny of one man or of a small coterie of men over a people. But as a lever for the moral and cultural elevation of the units of a nation or as a solution against mutual greed amongst nations themselves a democratic constitution has made no better promise than a monarchy. On the other hand, democracies have been more greedy. While in a monarchy one man's greed alone has to be propitiated, in a democracy the greed of an entire nation has to be satisfied. Nor is a democratic constitution necessarily more peace-loving. The Greek democracies

which revolted against one man's rule fought with one another on all kinds of rational and irrational issues and yet Greece defies our powers of praise. The republic of Rome levied tribute in kind and in coin and revelled in the fruits of subjugated possessions while Imperial Rome, its successor, throve through an era of Imperial debauché. The democracies of to-day are socialistic and syndicalistic in character and when they stand out completely organised there is nothing to prevent their bidding against one another for the mastery of foreign resources and markets. The old safeguard against the continued misuse of the powers of a democracy, by which it soon degenerated into an empire, seems no longer possible. If the French Republic ended in a French Empire and if the old Germanic states coalesced into one Imperial autocracy—these precedents

are getting out of historical possibility at the present time. The democratic constitution of America seems to give a definite lead in modern times militating against a democratic constitution evolving an imperialism. Democracies might war against one another and in the end one country might be dominated by another, each being a democracy in itself and not progressing towards any other political constitution. Hence every country marching to its goal of a democratic constitution, and the people of every country progressing in the manufacture of the machinery of war, we come to a stage of simultaneous advance in Democracy and Science! But what a dismal failure this has been in ensuring freedom and peace among nations needs no elucidation as could be easily seen. In the result progressive countries acquire new forces of devastation

and added motives for devastation, their victims being the less advanced countries of the world. The best we may hope for is that the western democracies may by a common understanding avoid needless waste by a peaceful partition of the opportunities for the exploitation of the less efficient nationalities. But no international arrangement to effect this understanding on a comprehensive scale can last long even if the great powers should sit together for compassing so revolting a purpose. The bones of contention will be there, the mind to contend for them will be alike there and the average Westerner has only advanced in the science and art of contending sadly unmindful of the element of humanity in him. He has improved many things around himself but himself he has not improved, least of all so as to leave less efficient nations in possession of what may belong

to them. The time may not be far off when one democracy may try to become as "efficient" as another in order to obtain the cotton of Egypt, the wheat of the Punjab, the jute of Bengal, the wool of Cashmere, the oils of Persia, the pearls of Ceylon and the gold of Kolar.

What would have been in *ancien regime* the ambition of a single masterful ruler has now become the ambition of an entire nation, while each individual has come to feel and act with the confidence of possessing a whole nation's resources at his back. The moral outlook of the nation has become narrowed down to that of an aggressive competitive individual; and the individual has become as bloated as the nation, while essentially as a human being he is perhaps not altogether worse than he was before. The righteousness that is said to exalt a nation has to emanate from a competitive

society impelled by the fear that none but the fittest can hope to survive. National righteousness has been pulled down to the level of that of the average individual and at his direction has been placed all the resources of the state. The old motive power of political ascendancy has thus not only become nationalised in the process of democratic advance but has been individualised on account of the identity between the nation and the unit composing it.

This identity has been brought about with a vital addition to the unit of every nation which India can ill afford to ignore. The co-optation of woman as a working force on equal footing with man in a democratic country is an achievement of the first quarter of the present century. The prevailing democratic formula has come to be one man is as good as another and every woman as

good as man. One vote one person equalises man and woman. Without women the war could not have been won, acknowledged Mr. Lloyd George, who was not in favour of votes for women till he found out their value after the outbreak of the war. They may navigate warships, pilot aeroplanes, become perfect in espionage, besides discharging civilian duties now ordinarily entrusted to men. More, they might be in charge of the machinery of warfare as tanks just as much as men may be.

Not only this. There is a distinct tendency for Western democracies to develop a domestic system as a suitable outcome of this creed of national efficiency. New homes on a colossal scale without the homeliness of homes where a papa and mamma selfishly look after their own tiny ones cannot take a long time into coming. Let every man, woman and

child be efficient as members of a democracy is the main propelling motive of modern Europe. Let the world be made safe for democracy is a conjoint injunction, although the safety of the world never tumbled as it does to-day in this process of making the world safe for democracy. What organic connection there is between the safety of the world and the democratic constitution of a country may elude one in an unthinking moment but the hollowness of the suggestion may become plain to those who have faith in the human element of a democratic constitution more than in any other if they would only put a few questions to themselves. Would the members of a democracy give up contending for higher wages, better houses, more wholesome food, ampler clothing, greater relaxation and more frequent opportunities for recoupment? And how can they get them all without



contending for favourable markets, cheap raw materials and wherever necessary for commandable labour? How can they get them all without competition and would they refrain to help themselves in the competition by securing political ascendancy, administrative influence, legislative facilities and fiscal freedom? The old claim for a policy of protection or subvention will be revived by some while others may go beyond and enforce military conscription and trade confiscations under one form or another and keep on progressing with the improvements in the machinery of war in the guise of scientific experiments.

As though to rescue mankind from such a plight America started the abortive principle of self-determination which has since then become little less than the laughing stock of students of modern events. It was no doubt a

magnificent injunction in the form of an inculcation of self-denial which emanated from one of the worthiest representatives of the new world. It is easy enough to comprehend the evolution of this idea from the United States whose history seems almost to stand pledged to such a mental development in the sphere of European politics. But the fulfilment of such a doctrine depends upon a moral basis which is yet to be conceived by the statesmen of Europe. Live and let live is not for small minds and European mind is yet too small, while its scientific advance is too far ahead to permit it to live and let live. It is no wonder that utilising the formula of self-determination as a timely political sedative to lull into a sense of security those who might raise questions impossible to answer at the moment, the great ones of Europe sent the phrase and all it was supposed to mean

into the scrap heap of the war, at the earliest opportunity at the conclusion of peace. The Fourteen Points of Wilson have vanished from the political horizon of the civilised world. And America has once again settled down perhaps to face the Yellow Peril without haste and without rest taking a patronizing interest in some of the outstanding questions of the reparations due from Germany. Once again Europe is where it had been left with the deduction that followed the humanitarian concept—in itself insufficient and inadequate either as a working hypothesis or as an acceptable truism.

India may well cogitate on the sufficiency of soul power in a world so constituted, without the scientific equipment of the West, without the identity between the unit and the nation that a Western democracy is so well calculated to enforce,

and without the contribution to the nation derived from the new role that has been assigned to woman in the West, with which she is quite able to cope. In addition, India has its own handicaps with a few of which we shall deal presently. The chances of a satisfactory political footing for India under Great Britain may no doubt be open to keen controversy but there could be hardly any controversy on the adequacy of soul power for securing the political independence of India either at the present moment or in the years to come, so long as Indian and world conditions should continue to be what they are in essential respects.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Fallacy of Common Disabilities

Another fallacy that Indian politicians labour under is that subjection to common disabilities is enough to create a political identity. They have failed to distinguish in their agitation all along between the ventilation of grievances for redress and the evolution of a political personality. The numerous sessions of political conferences and conventions have no doubt served to create a bond of union brought about by grievances common to all classes alike. But they have not so far led to the creation of a political personality out of the peoples of the country. A political personality does not require necessarily homogeneity in race, religion, language or community. Such homogeneity may do doubt powerfully and

materially help in the formation of a political personality. Even when the country has been under a common Government for such an unbroken period as India has been under British rule there is no evidence as yet of the better informed sections of the Indian population being animated by a desire to become a unified and indivisible factor as a political whole. On the other hand there have been a regular succession of political schisms as a consequence of the grant of larger rights and opportunities from time to time. It seems at times the best intellects of the country cannot help believing that India can develop its political personality only on the lines of heterogeneity, although thereby even the problem of ordinary government is bound to become far more acute. Hindus and Mahomedans are equally subject to the same laws, enjoy equal opportunities under them,

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and labour under identical disabilities. But the partial removal of these disabilities far from creating a political personality out of the two communities both of whom are equally natives of the country has served only to accentuate the differences between them as separate communities and political entities; they are yet to coalesce into one people politically and such coalescence is by no means rendered easier or more probable by the creation of separate electorates to the legislative bodies for each of them. The creation of separate electorates has only tended to keep them apart in the one sphere in which they could act together as mutually dependent political factors. From special electorates to the legislatures, the demand for the formation of special electorates in the constitution of municipal and local bodies has had to be complied with in some

instances. At the top of all these, appointments have come to be required to be apportioned according to communal preponderance irrespective of the fitness and qualifications of the candidates or of public interests. From selection to the Bench of the High Court to clerical posts in municipal offices, appointments are sought to be apportioned on the principle of communal representation. Efficiency and the claims of administrative requirements are relegated to take a secondary place giving precedence to communal demands. And worse. The institution of water tight communal compartments has been carried into the Hindu fold also. During the last ten years the agitation for self-government has been at its highest pitch; and this same period has witnessed the canker of communalism entering into every department of administration and into every



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sphere of public or quasi-public activity. From representation in the legislative councils to admission into schools and colleges, from employment in offices to tendering evidence before Commissions and Committees of enquiry, the disposal of every opening has come to be thought out and demanded in terms of caste and sub-caste. This must inevitably lead not only to burning the candle at both ends, one end, the indispensable British element, the other the insistent Indian element, but also to the insertion of new wicks in the intervening space to propitiate communal *amor propre*. The shadow has got the substance in its grip. Rights, privileges and opportunities as they are granted to the nation have to be sub-divided in many cases so as to be apportioned among the Communal units of the Indian population. Every fresh opportunity is availed of not so as to subserve the

highest interests of the country, but so as to be of advantage to individuals as members of particular communities. National interests are put behind communal interests, and communal interests in turn are superseded by the personal interests of those who stand out as the spokesmen of communal interests. Such an outcome instead of promoting and cementing national co-hesiveness operates as a perpetual process of national disintegration.

Helpful as such a result may be to the rulers from a strategic point of view, the evil has become so great that even they find that efficient and safe conduct of affairs is becoming a vexatiously trying job in the administration of the country. Municipal and legislative councils have become the theatres of communal rancour and intrigue, in some cases of recriminatory resolutions and debates. Such a situation may well justify the rulers

going back upon concessions already granted rather than going forward with them. The need for the British element in India has become more obvious than ever before within the last quinquennium after the Reforms with communalism as a recognised feature of the political machinery of India. The only difference that a thoughtful British administrator will find between the situation as it was and as it is at the present moment is that while he had to manage a pack of unitedly clamorous children some thirty years back, he has now to manage disunited and separately clamorous sections of political infants. The task is by no means easier but it will not make him turn his back upon India for good. It will only make him callous to a sense of real responsibility and incline him to surrender his well considered judgment to the fleeting necessities of the hour.

It is painfully becoming clear to an increasing extent that either there should be a development of a well assimilated political integrity doing away with communal separativeness which would make greater devolution of political powers safe, or there should be a resumption of powers and responsibilities already granted tentatively or experimentally with the best of intentions. One deplorable fact that is emerging into clear view as a consequence of the introduction of the Reform scheme is that the devolution of powers to a population so hopelessly divided as the peoples of India in the matter of political oneness is not compatible with the responsibilities of good government of which England cannot completely divest itself and which is its sole, and only justification in the eyes of the civilised world to prolong its stay in India. England's surrender in

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India will begin with such a devolution of powers and must react ingloriously on the political courage of the British people.

As the natives of a country grow in political stature the obstacles in the way of leaving them to govern themselves should become less, while for the past five years these difficulties have markedly increased in India. Not the task of governing the country but the task of training the country to govern itself has become more difficult. *If the unrest in the country at one stage led to grant of political privileges, the communal squabbles in the next stage have rendered futile the utility of any further concessions.* It is not meant that there is only a greater degree of unpleasantness on account of communal squabbles in the art of governing but this unpleasantness is a reaction to the grave disadvantage of the governed also.

To become politically one people although by religion and caste they may be different peoples is the task that awaits Indians before a change of heart on the part of the rulers could be expected in the interests of India. India is faced either with the necessity to become politically one people notwithstanding its separateness on account of religion and community or to carry the principle of separateness in every branch of political, civic and administrative functions of government, dividing the country according to communities as much as into villages and districts for purposes of administration and political progress. The impossibility of the latter process will become clear if only we should imagine that the process of Indianising the army in India is to be carried out with a thoroughness and earnestness that could not be called into question. In

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addition, if an Indian navy is also to be built up the communal claims of Mahomedans and of Hindus of various castes and of no castes cannot but make those who are in charge of such a mission drop the entire scheme as the only way of escaping a maddening situation.

Either India must become more to every native of the country than his religion, caste and community, or India must be admitted to be less to every native of the country than the community to which he belongs. Is the community more to him or the country more to him is the one vital point for his decision and in case the decision should be that the country is more, then in politics, administration and public affairs community should have absolutely no recognition and must be erased from the minds of the rulers and of the ruled as

well. There must be only one community politically and that the Indian community. An Indian may be anything by his religion but as a member of a political nationality he has neither religion nor caste nor community. He is an Indian and no less. If, on the other hand, such a political nationality cannot be possible in India for the reason that in reality there is no Indian but only a Mahomedan, a Parsi, a Brahmin, a Non-Brahmin Hindu and a Non-caste Hindu, then changes in India must necessarily proceed upon communal distinctions as they have already done to a great extent. Political changes must take note of communal proportions and a communal balance of power will have to be maintained as the most serious task of the rulers of the country. How Swarajya or even self-government under Great Britain, could ever be conceivable as a



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result of such a course of events and of such a condition of political progress does not admit of the slightest doubt. That condition is in fact a negation of the claim for the recognition of even an effective measure of real Autonomy for India. *On the other hand, it will constitute in reality the title deed of the foreigner to perpetuate his authority as the country's indispensable governor, an umpire whose presence could not be dispensed with at any time from any part of the country from any sphere of Government.* The number of servants of the Crown of British born descent must increase necessarily and more power must be vested in each of them, a process which must increase the cost of administration enormously and tell upon the moral calibre of the country a good deal.

With the increasing removal of disabilities the motive for united action

loses power while the creation of more offices and the vesting of greater powers in popular bodies are followed by communal discords immediately. The motive to be united becomes less strong and the motive to be divided becomes stronger. The ultimate prospect in view is no more than an Indian constitution framed to propitiate communal antagonisms and to provide against communal distrust by the perpetual presence of the British official in every responsible position in the country.

## CHAPTER V

### The Creed of the Charka

In the entire course of Indian history which has recorded a long succession of Hindu dynasties and foreign dominations that have preceded British rule, or for that matter in the history of any other country in the world, no one has come across an industrial implement such as the spinning wheel or the ploughshare as a mentionable instrument of a great political transformation. At least in the inculcation of the fallacy of soul power a certain degree of metaphysical bracing up may be detected; but in the creed of the charka even the economic silver lining that could otherwise have been more clearly visible has become enveloped in an impenetrable mist of political occultism. It is not to be denied that a disuse of foreign articles in

favour of home made ones will be to the economic good of any country, if it could manufacture such articles even at a slightly higher cost of production. But to detect in the manufacture of yarn from cotton grown in that country an agency for terminating a long established political power or for compelling that power to sink to the level of a normal suzerain is to wilfully deceive oneself in the first instance and try to lead others to deceive themselves in the next. The charka is no magical instrument to bring about a political revolution as a consequence of a number of revolutions of its own. Spinning is not a *mantra*, and, its economic value not being denied, any inherent political significance sought to be attached to the charka will only make it look like a ridiculous make-believe for no fault of its own. The position of the apostle of the charka is so complex and

confusing that one fails to understand the precise source from which the charka is to derive its power as a political programme. It is rendered further more complex by his repeated insistence that not unless all people in India should begin to spin its full utility could be realised. This again is still more complicated by his attributing to the charka a power of moral purification and to spinning a spiritual influence both of which are not unlikely to endue the creed of the charka with a mysticism which may incomprehensibly fascinate not a few.

In the first place, to promise anything on the expectation that all the inhabitants of a country would act in a particular manner is to betray painful ignorance of what is within the limits of achievable endeavour, and what is not. The assumption that all people will do anything barring what is demanded as a part of

human nature, is rather pathetic. All people do not follow one religion or one moral or social code or one political programme. In the second place, is the insistence on all people spinning or on the production of a sufficient quantity of yarn for the wants of the country? If the object in view is the production of sufficient yarn, it is hardly necessary that all people should spin since the required quantity could be produced by processes that do not call for imported machinery and the textile production of India could be completely met out of Indian labour, capital and raw materials. This would only mean that instead of the whole population capable of working the charka spinning for an exceedingly limited period of time a much smaller number could be put to the production of yarn for a longer period daily on a commercial footing, the process of spinning being

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improved by suitable contrivances, as the process of weaving has been vastly improved of late. The entire process will be a brisk business one and with the enthusiasm that has been created for home made textiles the undertaking would be very promising. But such a scheme as this, however valuable in the economic interests of the people, and however capable of leading to beneficial indirect consequences, need not be distorted into a scheme of political salvation for the country. To-day India grows all the cereals and pulses it consumes. Has this prevented an unhealthy political outlook on the part of England or has it lead to a change of political conviction on the part of Englishmen? And, if India does not import British or foreign yarn the countries that sell yarn to India will do something else than produce yarn for India. How British sovereignty over India

will come to an end simply because foreign yarn is not imported passes one's comprehension. The revolutions of the charka are not supposed to have a psychic effect and cannot paralyse British squadrons or render the British navy immobile ; nor could it be expected that mere spinning would make the spinners efficient units of a military force. The Indian Congress may make spinning its franchise for membership. But the franchise in a world of armies, navies and air fleets is expenditure on armaments and investment on an expanding application of science to the art of warfare. The advocacy of spinning yarn, growing cotton, and tending cattle as equivalents to possessing an army, navy and an air service is a strange mental perversity in combination with stranger obliquity in politics. To urge that if all India would spin *thinking of swaraj as it spins*, India will get the



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strength of a first rate military power is to ask people to put faith in political quackery of an impossible type to a limitless extent.

If, on the other hand, the apostle of the charka regards spinning in the light of a great unifying and humanising agency, as a visible symbol of man working for man apart from the idea of work as a source of profit, and as a pledge of human brotherhood in a spirit of penitence and purification, then he seeks to introduce a new religion and a new philosophy, with a new symbolism and a ritual, labour on the charka becoming supplementary to worship in temple, mosque or church. A new sect of humanitarians is sought to be evolved and Mahatma Gandhi must emerge out of his non-co operation and peaceful wreaking of Government as the founder of a new cult, as the Messiah of a new gospel

and must be content with such followers from all countries and nationalities as may be fascinated by it, without a touch of the grosser side of economics or current politics about it. *Turning the charka in such a case would become a spiritual, cultural observance and not an industrial occupation or a means of attaining a political aspiration.* It might even become within a short time a superstition with those who might at first have taken to it attracted by the novel subtlety of such a presentation. All these, however, are quite apart from any integral connection with political freedom for India.

In pressing the case of the charka Mr. Gandhi has mixed up its merits, real and fancied, as an industrial occupation, as an instrument of political change and as a token of inter-communal brotherhood. The more he has lingered on these claims with which he has endued the

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charka, the more and more monomaniacal has he become on the all-sufficiency of spinning.. Will it not make you rich, will it not make you united, will it not make you politically independent, nay will it not even purify you are the questions he puts at every turn, concentrating all his rightly acquired prestige on the charka. It is no good pointing to him the stupendous assumptions he makes in putting each of these questions, telling him that the time will never come when *all people* will or can spin, and even if India should spin all its yarn as a commercial concern that accomplishment can never disestablish British rule, and that the moral value in spinning may soon degenerate into a superstition as so many observances have already become in the past. Above all, he can scarcely realise that in politics spinning has no place except the remotest one of having

emanated from one who has been in the forefront of a great political ferment. When that ferment began, the three great boycotts that were urged were those of schools and colleges, of law courts and of legislative bodies. As this programme of triple boycotts gave little promise of the anticipated measure of success, Mr. Gandhi naturally began to concentrate on a programme that would not involve a heavy measure of sacrifice and which even those who were for entering the legislative councils might willingly adopt. *It was a strategic occupation of a new citadel in the place of the abandoned ones.* But it was a citadel without an armoury and an arsenal. It was a monastery. There was no occupation for his force except to be model monks beaming with the joy of being at peace with oneself. At the time when Mr. Gandhi asked for a crore of

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rupees for obtaining Swaraj his infatuation for the charka was a subdued passion, one among others and within comprehensible limits. But as every effort of his since then met with a repulse and a set back and as he had to go on suspending his triple and quadruple boycotts, his civil disobedience, satyagraha and hartal, he came to cling to the charka clutching at it as his last straw, as his sole and only national programme for the attainment of swaraj. How long the country will persist in swearing by this fatuous delusion cannot yet be hazarded. It is time that Indian politicians got out of such a senile mentality along with getting out of the slavish mentality that the imposition of a foreign domination might have brought about. To believe in the spinning wheel and the inane soul power of India as instruments of a political transformation is to guarantee the per-

petuation of the present political servitude of the country. If India is shaking itself free from the wide awake stupour of those moderate politicians whose political faith has consisted almost exclusively in an annual recital of pious resolutions, the time has come for it to shake itself free from nursery tales, however saintly the persons who might tell them. Faith in conscious political mendicancy as well as in unconscious political delusions almost bordering upon political mendacity, is alike equally ineffectual as an earnest and effective political outlook. But the mistake of confounding economic measures as instruments of political progress is still more dangerous as political as well as industrial development on right lines is held up thereby. Such a mistake bars the way of economic progress on well conceived economic lines. If Charka and handloom factories are established as

business concerns and cottage industries wherever possible and not recommended as means of a political transformation the economic condition of the country will be improved while its political grasp will not be enfeebled. The advocacy of the charka in a scheme of political liberation as the pivot on which vast political changes of a vital character could be brought about can only distort economic advance and make political progress morilund. *It is not denied that economic prosperity will be beneficial for political as well as non-political purposes but out of the roots of economic prosperity to expect a political transformation without efforts that are primarily political will be to anticipate a crop that has had nothing to do with the seeds sown.* Just as the physical stamina of those concerned would be a factor in ensuring success in a business undertaking so

also would economic prosperity be a factor in contributing to the success of a political undertaking but it should not be expected to lead to political results without efforts which are primarily political. To make the position clear by a comparison, soil manure and water are indispensable for the growth of a plant but no plant can grow without a cutting, seedling or seed being imbedded. Similarly economic prosperity physical stamina and a high standard of rectitude may all be essential for the success of a



that was separated from it by thousands of miles and whose natives coming in handfuls subjugated a vast continent with the men and materials available to them in the very land to which they came as lucky adventurers.

To divorce politics from economics without in any way diminishing the output of activity in directions that would tend to the economic good of a country has become therefore an inevitable necessity with the development of physical strength as an indispensable attribute of real soul power.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Fallacy of Birthright

Among the notions that have influenced most politicians of all ranks in India so as to distort their sense of proportion is that India under the British Crown is entitled to what they deem to be its "birthrights." The evil of acquiescing in such a belief without an adequate examination of rights and how they are obtained is that they forget that India has yet to acquire its birthrights under British rule. No birthright can be claimed from a process of *apriori* reasoning from the point of view of abstract rights that all men should possess. If a generation of men in any country should compel its rulers to recognise certain rights of the ruled, the next generation may be said to inherit those rights as its birthrights. The

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generation that acquires them does not acquire them as "birthrights," but as the triumphs of a keen struggle, on occasions as the prize of a civil war, or as the award of national unity, daring and intrepid strategy. In fact these rights may be described more appropriately as deathrights instead of birthrights. However, once having been so acquired, they become the birthrights of succeeding generations. What are the rights that Indians have so acquired from Great Britain which deserve to be designated "birthrights"?

In the realm of political rights India's position to day is as precarious as it was when Burke impeached Warren Hastings. Rather, it is worse since England has ceased to produce men of the calibre of Burke. The rights that have been conceded in response to political agitation within the past forty years

are concessions from which has been abstracted the right of the subject as against Executive Authority in the realm of inviolable political guarantees. These "rights" remind one of the rights conceded to his live stock by Robinson Crusoe who wanted them to be alive and well kept to the extent that was possible to him without his having to go in search of them and so as to be within his easy reach at the breakfast hour. The entertainment that a host provides for a guest to command his hospitality reserving to himself the option of sending him to occupy the cellar below or to be fastened to one of the trees in his park is not far remote from the political rights that Great Britain has been prevailed upon to concede to the ruled in the Government of India. To mistake these concessions for birthrights is to make the initial political blunder of

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an infant in politics. The right to administer its own affairs with the machinery that it can afford to provide for itself, the right to tax itself and to spend its revenues, the right to direct its home and fiscal policy, to determine its tariffs and to reciprocate the treatment that Indians get in other lands, these rights which constitute the elements of Political Autonomy of a qualified type India has neither inherited nor acquired. To speak of any of them as a birthright is to bungle with a vengeance. That they *ought to be* the birthrights of the people of every country is a doctrine at once divinely humanitarian and transcendently benignant just as that all men ought to be equally wealthy, well-housed, well-fed and agreeably employed.

One reason why Indians so often speak of their birthrights is because, English

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men having their birthrights, Indians by their intimate contact with the British have come to believe that the birthrights of the Britisher are the birthrights of the Indian also. They are equally subjects of the British Crown, and they have equal rights is the conclusion drawn. Furthermore, an Indian in England is not distinguishable from an Englishman except for his colour. This again intensifies the fallacy. The Indian comes to believe that he must possess in his own country the rights he enjoys in the country of his rulers. Ordinarily every person has more rights in his own country than in another. But in regard to India, what may look like a political irony is that Indians have more rights in England than in their own country. The explanation is that while an Indian is no more than a subject of the Crown, an Englishman is much more than

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a subject of the Crown. In fact he enters into the composition of the Crown. In India, on the other hand, a member of the ruling race becomes a member of the subject race. The Englishman in India foregoes many of the rights he exercises in England while the Indian in England enjoys many rights which are not open to him in India. Indians get politically assimilated to Englishmen while in England, and Englishmen get assimilated to Indians while in India. India drags down a higher political status. England pulls up a lower status. Where is the "birthright" of such a country as this?

When grave protests are made in the Legislative Assembly against the violation of constitutional rights by the passing of the Bengal Ordinance one could only smile at the hollowness of the show. Not to speak of constitutional rights, no right

of the subject as such has been established in India, notwithstanding the extraordinary jurisdiction that may be vested in the High Courts and notwithstanding the right to vote on the budget. On the other hand, the Regulation of 1818 is a binding legislation and is a negation of the freedom of person that may be guaranteed to a subject who may not have become a self governing citizen. Laws and Regulations made by the executive are yet binding on the highest of tribunals and run counter to the most primary right of the subject. What is not deducible as a part of the common law of the realm, or is not a parliamentary statute or an authorised enactment will not be binding on the English Courts. Regulations of the type of 1818 will be enough to plunge England into a revolution if proposed to be made operative except in times of grave national peril justifying martial



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law Whereas for a century and more these executive regulations have been in force as though during all these normal decades of British rule an abnormal martial law period has prevailed or England has been in perpetual peril The question is not whether Irishmen might not have been arbitrarily arrested during the Irish struggle, but whether England as a self-governing country would tolerate an executive law legalising arbitrary arrest and detention during the pleasure of the executive as a part of the law of the realm

burden of the taxpayer defies understanding. The question becomes impossible to avoid whether Great Britain could not rule India more honestly without these costly, vexatious, estranging, enmity-promoting make-believes and baubles which are more useful for purposes of political deception than of political training. The man before whom the budget is placed for his vote and whose vote has no guaranteed political value may be taken into polite or impolite Police custody at any time and detained without trial awaiting the pleasure of the executive. The situation reminds one irresistibly of the sheep to be slaughtered being guests until the hour of slaughter. If Indians had understood so far their political status they would not have ventured to speak of their constitutional rights much less of their political birthrights. But a more pathetic sight is

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the infantile simplicity with which Indians believe that they are entitled to be treated as equal subject in British colonies, ignoring their status in their native land. And, by the way, a still more pathetic and saddening circumstance than even this is the belief of a section of Indian Mahomedans that they could become a decisive factor in European and Asiatic complications !

We have seen that the most striking aspect of Indian Swaraj is that it is a superstructure which has for its foundation a thin layer of untenable assumptions, held by a process of easy self-deception. The edifice sought to be raised on such a foundation could only be worthy of it. And the melancholy phenomenon to which Indians have come to reconcile themselves is that they still believe in going on with the building of such a superstructure. The sooner they aban-

done the process of such a construction and looked to a firm and well laid foundation the better would it be for the present and the future of India. It is hardly possible to fancy even in one's wildest imagination a free and independent India or even an India as a self-governing member of the British Commonwealth, built up with the cobwebs of soul power, the magic effect of the charka as an instrument of political transformation, imaginary birthrights which were never acquired by preceding generations, and a political personality reduced to abjectly transparent communal and sub communal shreds. The eclipse that has fallen on Indian political thought during the last seven years promises to continue as the counsels that still prevail in Indian political ranks do not fail to indicate. The longer this eclipse continues the sadder will it be

for India and perhaps merrier for thoughtful and not very fair minded British politicians. When the deplorable shadow that has fallen on the country will lift lies with those who will have the courage to retrace their steps and dare to encounter a little temporary unpopularity from their own countrymen if inevitable.

## CHAPTER VII

### **Surrender or Decadence?**

If ever a country could be happy in its history that country assuredly seems to be England. When against the solemn and impassioned appeals of Chatham and Burke the stubborn folly of the ministers of George III prevailed ending finally in the severance of America, the chapter of events was wound up with a melancholy entry on the debit side of the political ledger of England. So lost England America. But a century and a half later the loss came back as a gain beyond the dreams of avarice. One realises now that although England lost America, America was not lost to England. Far from that, America, has been the salvation of England although the cause of humanity still stands where it has stood all along.

However, what a superb illumination this story of loss and gain of the worth of political liberty by the side of the absolute worthlessness of continued political tutelage as a part of political science or ethics. It is not meant to apply the lesson of America to India, as India is no more a part of England than America is a part of India. If the German War had not broken out there could have been no occasion for such a striking illustration of the value of the full-grown political manhood of America to its parent stalk from which it had separated. Equally strange or stranger epochs are still possible in the future history of nations if England is capable of taking a long retrospect with a view to guide its present policy towards the high place the future has reserved for nations which work for human welfare. England to-day can do nothing better than rise to

the full stature of its political experience.

To a thinking mind few things can be more painful than the growing decadence of a great power, and when this decadence could be arrested but yet is suffered to progress at an uninterrupted pace one experiences a feeling such as a tragedy in life evokes. Signs of dissolution of a masterful country can hardly escape even indifferent observers. The fast accumulating evidences of progressive degeneracy of a world power cannot but affect even those who may be expecting in the fulness of time to be freed from the mastery of that power. The explanation is simple. It lies in the element of humanity common to all cultured nations. Had England been all bad in itself in its history, in its literature, in its sense of fairplay, in the growth of its political constitution



and even in the sense of what is due to others along with itself, if it had been bad in all these respects the break up of England's empire would be awaited with a glow of satisfaction and would be hailed with relief and expressions of joy when the event happened. But such has not been its record. In fact had it been so, England would hardly have become what it has become.

Confining ourselves to England's rule in India, it is impossible to escape the fear that England has entered upon a process of conscious demoralisation in respect of her responsibility as a ruling country. One consolation in this situation is the fact that it has not arisen from her financial, military or naval weakness but purely from want of right discernment and to a certain extent from want of manly political character, on the part of those who have been at the helm

of her affairs. The nation's game has been played by proxies some of whom have been at critical moments either callous to sentiments of humanity or have proved false to a higher trust obsessed by imaginary claims of prestige. The successive humiliations that came upon England with unbroken succession in the Near East, Middle East and Far East a short time back after the conclusion of the War have all had their source in one cause only, the deplorable lack of political honesty on the part of men in power. This lack of honesty in her responsible statesmen does not justify us to conclude from these that the political decadence of England as a *nation* has commenced. Without intending to imply such an accusation, it has become incumbent upon the judges of its policy in India to own to a fear of England's decadence as a *ruling Power*.

Divided and unarmed, lacking a political personality even for the exercise of a wholesome moral corrective, the people of India can force no conclusions with a power which is strong enough to regard with indifference the inane, illusory, political makeshifts that have been placed before the people of India for their political redemption. However, it is plain that England's stability in India is coming to be more in the disunion of India rather than in England's wisdom and strength. Indians have come to feel that in their division is the strength of England, in their powerlessness England's might, in their incapacity to solve their destiny, the Charter of British Rule. There was a time when not the weakness of India alone but the merits of Great Britain also helped to establish and consolidate British power. But that time is now gone. The opinion is gaining ground that the power

of England in India is coming to rest solely on the powerlessness of India, without any outstanding merit of Great Britain entering into the composition of that power. What could the weak do against the strong except try all kinds of devices known to the West and the East and even invent a few new ones. But devices which are in the nature of mere mental gymnastics and metaphysical conundrums can break no bone and the whole thing becomes sooner or later an amusing diversion. England is justified in thinking that millions of babies populate India and that it can put up with their pranks. Strong in such a conviction England need not even enter into the ethical side of such a position. Does a fisherman who has made his catch try to prevent the fish from jumping about as he is dragging the net? Why should England then worry itself with

sundry breaches of the peace, talk of non-co-operation and wrecking while Indians continue to render unto Cæsar what is Cæsar's. Why should it be upset by thousands of Indians going to prison as though it were a pastime or an act of heroism? That seems to be the trend that England has come to follow and any other country in England's position would have done the same.

Englishmen of all parties and classes have yet to arrive at a valuation of the political status of what has been described as the brightest jewel of the Crown in the graphic language of their own writers. That status is no more than that of a subject possession which, apart from a few meretricious concessions, enjoys nothing in the nature of a guaranteed political right. British rule in India is as much an Autocracy to-day as it was in the days of its swaddling clothes without any kind

of constitutional limitation What it enacts is "law," what it does is blessing in disguise, what it levies is "tax", what it spends on itself is for "good government", what it refrains from is for "the safety of the governed" It is, in fact, a dispensation co opted with Providence All efforts to set limits to this Absolutism have ignominiously failed and have miraculously recoiled on the governed with stunning effect and demoniacal cleverness In the name of economy expenditure mounts up, in the name of Indianisation the bill of cost on account of Englishmen in India swells, in the name of reforms, inefficiency, demoralisation and deadlock result, larger openings have led the way to melancholy corruption such as never before was witnessed There is neither good Government nor prospect of self-Government What Nemesis brings about such a result who can try to contemplate

without bitterness entering into the soul ! The only two questions that suggest themselves are will not Indians outgrow political babyhood and Englishmen rise above seasoned state-craft ?

From India's point of view neither its own helplessness nor England's callousness need be a great calamity. For, nothing worse can befall India under British rule, as in any case England would not cease to care for it less than the owner of a cattle-farm has to care for his possession. It however forces the conviction upon the mind of intelligent observers in India and abroad that England's capacity for solving its political problems in the East is fast ebbing out of it and that the task of solution might at any moment devolve on any other nation sufficiently intrepid and resourceful for the purpose. And India on its part cannot but be on the alert to look out for any other power

which may possibly accomplish what England has failed to accomplish as its mission in India.

The situation, in brief, is this. England can securely act on the correct understanding that India cannot overthrow British rule either by violence or by withdrawal of co-operation. And England can act on this understanding in a steadily demoralising manner which may prove growingly ruinous to India. It can continue to do so to the end of its rule and throughout its rule, suffering only such good to accrue to India as may be indispensable in the carrying out of such a policy. This is the axis, upon which British rule in India has come to turn. If England did not change this axis, it could be no fault of India if the thoughtful men of the country brushing aside the party of co-operation and non-co-operation as well should



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appeal to any section of the civilized world to end British custody of India even to bring about a change of masters. To choose one's own protector may not be easy; but, having regard to the jealousies that actuate Western nations the prospect may come into view at any time. Will it be bad statesmanship to have an ally in India who will be left untempted by such a prospect?

Apart from these contingent considerations, has not the time arrived for England to decide what she should do with India? In her rule she has been neither sufficiently despotic nor sufficiently democratic, neither wisely selfish nor indubitably unselfish. India has progressed more than it could be conducive to the security of British rule, although it cannot overthrow that rule. It is therefore for England to make up its mind what it wants of India. No nation

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had ever the opportunity that India offers to England. But it requires a mind as deep as great, as profound as catholic, as rich in imagination as in spirit of service, a godly mind in fact, to grasp this opportunity. Burke and Glandstone are but names to-day. Even a Salisbury one has to search for in vain. An Abraham Lincoln England is hardly capable of producing. Yet, the average mentality of England is not incapable of sustaining a faint hope on the part of the thinking community of India. Will those Englishmen who are afflicted with the malady of national responsibility and are animated by a higher and nobler patriotism address themselves to the task that awaits England in India at this very hour of India's travail?